

[Home](#)[Meeting Topics](#)[Join Today](#)[Projects](#)

Summer / Fall 2018

Volume 8, Issue 3

## ILLW from Spring Point Ledge Light

[South Portland, ME](#)*by Tim Watson, KB1HNZ*

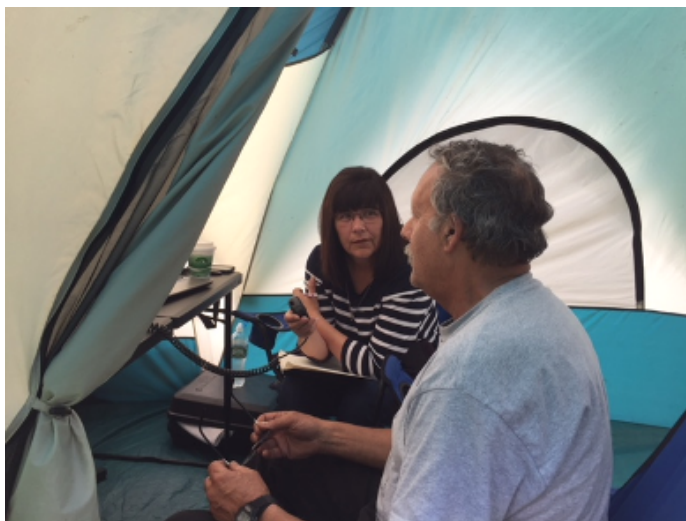
SOUTH PORTLAND, ME - During the weekend of August 18-19th, the WSSM team activated Spring Point Ledge Lighthouse for International Lighthouse & Lightship Weekend (ILLW). Club members operated from 10am-4pm on both days, using the special event call sign K1S.

[Full Story](#)

## Maine 2 Meter FM Simplex Challenge Winners Announced

[8th Annual](#)*by Tim Watson, KB1HNZ*

## 2018 Field Day at Wassamki Springs

[Scarborough, ME](#)*by Tim Watson, KB1HNZ*

SCARBOROUGH, ME - The WS1SM team participated in their 8th annual ARRL Field Day on the weekend of June 23-24th, from Wassamki Springs Campground, in Scarborough, ME, finishing the weekend with maximum bonus points and a record number of QSOs!

[Full Story](#)

## 6th Annual Maine QSO Party is September 22-23

[Announced DXpeditions](#)*by Tim Watson, KB1HNZ*



Congratulations to Ara Kemezys AC1FB, from Old Orchard Beach, ME, who made 69 QSOs in 23 different towns, for a total of 1,587 points. Click the button below for complete results, including category winners.

[Full Story](#) >

## QSL Corner



Since August 21st marked the 50th Anniversary of the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia, which ended the Prague Spring movement, we'll take a look at some QSL cards from Czech international broadcaster, Radio Prague.

[See More QSL's](#) >



The 6th Annual Maine QSO Party takes place September 22-23. For more information, and complete rules, click the button below.

[Full Story](#) >

## WSSM-ECT Participates in Regional Sheltering Exercise

Windham, ME

by Tim Watson, KB1HNZ



WESTBROOK, ME – On Saturday, August 11th, WSSM Emergency Communications Team members participated in a Regional Sheltering Exercise, at Westbrook High School.

[Full Story](#) >

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

**September 13th** - from 7PM-9PM at the CCEMA Bunker, 22 High Street, Windham, ME.

**October 11th** - from 7PM-9PM at the CCEMA Bunker, 22 High Street, Windham, ME.

**November 8th** - from 7PM-9PM at the CCEMA Bunker, 22 High Street, Windham, ME

## Classified Ads

Check out the ads on page 2 to view items for sale, upcoming hamfests, announcements, and wanted items.



### From the Editor's Desk

For more news and articles, between newsletters, [click here](#) to visit our blog.

## Who's Afraid of Reginald Fessenden?

In 1874 telegraph message traffic was rapidly changing the way people communicated, becoming, in the words of Western Union, "the nervous system of commerce." But within a year, experimentation in acoustic telegraphy would allow for tones and eventually, the human voice, to be transmitted via those same wires.

On December 23, 1900, Canadian researcher, Reginald Fessenden used a modified spark gap transmitter fitted with a specially designed high frequency interrupter, to transmit the words: "Hello. One, two, three, four. Is it snowing where you are, Mr. Thiessen?" over a distance of one mile. Although crude, and barely intelligible above the noise of the spark, the experiment would lead to the radical idea of producing sinusoidal continuous waves to transmit sound, which forever changed the way we would use radio.

Advances in technology can be disruptive to old ideas. Sometimes they even displace the old, if the advancement makes tasks more efficient, easier to use, or is commercially more viable. This is not a new wrinkle in the history of mankind, so it was with complete dismay that I read an article in the Summer issue of *Echo Ireland*, recently, that blamed Joe Taylor K1JT for "destroying amateur radio," because he developed a digital mode called FT8.

The article, by Kirk Kleinschmidt NToZ, calls 2017 the beginning of the "hampocalypse" and equates Joe Taylor's FT8 digital mode with a deadly pathogen that "grew exponentially, suffocating other modes as it mushroomed beyond all practical limits." He continues to predict that "non-machine QSOs would be outlawed," and amateur allocations would be "reduced to 5 kHz-wide slices every 2 MHz." Kleinschmidt blames FT8 for the lack of "traditional activity" on the bands, saying "everybody was JTing and FTing when I was looking the other way."

Using the same logic, we would have to conclude that Reginald Fessenden is actually responsible for "destroying ham radio," since he effectively caused a swell of popularity of that radical new mode, AM, and a subsequent lack of "traditional activity," (CW). This would mean that ham radio has actually been dead since before the existence of things like: ham radio, the FCC, and the American Radio Relay League. *What were they thinking?*

There's no doubt that FT8 has seen a huge surge in popularity over the last year, similar to the response to JT65 not long ago, and PSK31 before that, but I haven't noticed any drop off in so-called "traditional activity" as a result. Instead, I find myself getting on the bands at times when I normally wouldn't have, working stations on FT8, because the mode is so efficient it makes communication possible where it wasn't before. For example, during the solar storm a few weekends ago, when there was no activity at all on SSB on any of

the HF bands, because of the poor propagation, I was still able to make a few QSOs on FT8.

As a technical achievement alone, Joe Taylor's WSJT-X software suite and the modes he developed for it, are exceptional. They represent an advancement in technology in the same spirit as the invention of the telephone, or Amplitude Modulation. It may be disruptive to those who are "looking the other way" and not taking part, but it certainly isn't the beginning of the end, as Mr. Kleinschmidt would like us to think. On the contrary, it highlights the experimental nature of amateur radio in its persistence to develop and discover better and more efficient ways of communicating.

73'

Tim Watson  
KB1HNZ

[Page 2 >>](#)